DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 301 260 JC 880 557

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TITLE	Scholarship and the Community College Administrator.
INSTITUTION	Chicago State Univ., Ill.
PUB DATE	88
NOTE	10p.
PUB TYPE	Viewpoints (120)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Administrators; College Administration; College Faculty; *Community Colleges; Governing Boards; *Leadership; *Professional Development; Research; *Scholarship; *Teacher Administrator Relationship; Two Year Colleges

ABSTRACT

Community college administrators need to become more active in the scholarly pursuits of inquiry, writing, publishing, experimentation, and investigation if they are to emerge as institutional leaders and gain the respect of their colleagues and the educational community. Though administrators are often perceived as alienated from scientific inquiry, they offer valuable perspectives on how certain policies and programs can affect students and faculty. Their paradigms should be identified and presented for examination by others and used as the foundation upon which to construct learning activities. Administrators should be involved in the conceptualization of how educational administration can be systematically studied and how policies affect student learning. College presidents and boards should support scholarship by encouraging administrators to participate in symposia and other intellectual events; sponsoring sabbaticals for research; listening to research ideas; encouraging collaboration between faculty and administrators; and allowing flexibility that will foster scholarship. Administrators can, in turn, expand their perceptions of themselves to include scholarship. (AJL)

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Scholarship and the Community College Administrator

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The prevalent assumption that there is an inverse relationship between educational leadership and the community college administrator has become increasingly difficulty to ignore in the years since i have left the community college environment. Community college faculty have intimated that an administrator is among other things, "a paper pusher," "an acquiescent prisoner of an ivy tower," "a manger," and "a not too bright education major." Some faculty affirm knowingly that administrators cannot be expected to contribute much to instructional leadership or educational administration as a field of inquiry.

Presidents and boards of two-year colleges, all too often, appear to unwittingly contribute to the faculty's perception of administrators by highlighting the management aspects of community college administration. Even though some community college administrators seem to prefer to view themselves as managers who define goals, identify options and make cost-effective decisions, the outcomes of educational institutions are much more than an amalgamation of cost effective decisions. Educational institutions provide a variety of services and are expected to be sources for preparing citizens with skills and mental acumen needed to function successfully in our very

complex society. Scholarship (inquiry, writing, publishing, experimentation, and investigation) among administrators and faculty promotes the educational leadership role of administrators and sets the tone for intellectual activity in the college. Thus, by becoming more active in scholarly pursuits, educational administrators (or managers) will become more active educational leaders who are constantly aware of the dynamic interrelationships between administrative style, curricular issues, societal needs, and students' outcomes.

Recognizing the need for scholarship among community college faculty, a 1986 article in The Chronicle of Higher Education urged two-year faculty to stay active as scholars to avoid burnout, to gain visibility in the academic community, and more importantly, to exemplify "intellectual curiosity" and "inquiry." A similar call for scholarship, however, was not extended to community college administrators. For exemplification, the article did mention one community college's symposiums and scholarly publication. Both the symposiums and publication were faculty focused. City, to the contrary, appears to be the first journal in the 75th-year history of The City Colleges of Chicago (CCC), which displays articles, poetry, and reviews of faculty and administrators. The journal's appearance has enlivened faculty and administrators while promoting an air of intellectual activity and creativity that invigorates faculty and administrators.

Besides being linked to national visibility and enhancing the status of the college, scholarship among faculty and administrators can mitigate some of the us-versus-them mindsets, foster a sense of collegiality, and establish the credibility of administrators as

educational leaders. Many two-year college administrators have earned doctorates examining questions and issues in educational administration. and they have completed research oriented dissertations.

Educational administration as a field of inquiry, though not a discipline with a long history of systematic investigation, discourse and theorizing, is expanding as a body of knowledge. As a discipline, it is linked to social science, policy analysis, organizational development, management, and other new disciplines (like the study of work) struggling to shed the stigma of "soft" to gain the respectability usually associated with scientific modes of accumulating knowledge.

Possibly because educational administrators are viewed as managers and practitioners (and not scientists or researchers), there is an assumption that administrators are alienated from scientific modes of formulating questions, making observations, and presenting evidence about what happens, why it happens, and what will happen as they attempt to organize and manage learning environments. It is not uncommon, nonetheless, to discover that individual administrators have identified relationships and have formulated predictions about what-to-expect-when. These administators are engaging in a modified form of inquiry as they continuously attempt to understand what is happening in their colleges. For the most part, this inquiry and theory formulation stay in the administrators' minds and are not presented in a manner that would add to the general information about educational administration or the relationships between specific programs and students' outcomes.

If educational administrators are to emerge as educational leaders and gain the respect of their colleagues and the educational

community, institutional research and research conducted by faculty and administrators need to be utilized for curricular development and evaluation. About two decades ago, Cohen and Roueche (1969) affirmed that two-year college presidents needed to be educational leaders; the researchers proclaimed that two-year college administrators were too often mangers, absorbing ideas from other levels of education. Today, things have changed a bit: educational managers are needed to run educational institutions smoothly and with financial soundness. Yet, still, dynamic and active educational leadership is needed from educational managers. This type of management enhances the learning of students and brings about change in the society.

Scholarship leads. Administrators offer valuable perspectives about what happens with students and faculty given certain policies and programs in community colleges; their paradigms should be identified and presented for examination by others, and, where appropriate, constructed into learning activities. Educational administrators as educational leaders should be involved in the conceptualization of how educational administration can be systematically studied and how various administrative policies and practices affect students' learning. Without the participation of community college administrators, others will provide leadership for them by defining the questions, developing methodologies and presenting ways of viewing what happens in community colleges. Without leaders from the community colleges, admnistrators of the two-year colleges will be reacting to the perceptions and agendas of others.

Needless to say, discussions of various paradigms that underline

modes of inquiry and practice could add vim and vigor to the study of educational administration and policy analysis. Discussions highlighting various paradigms and their limitations for explaining and predicting occurrences have been highlighted by researchers for the last 15 years (Allison, 1971; Cohen and March, 1974; Nelson, 1977; Astin and Scherrei, 1980; and Shakeshaft and Nowell, 1984).

In her examination of prevalent metaphors in educational administration, Hansen (1984) asserts that "examination of the way we come to know about education or the science of education reveals a way of knowing that excludes almost completely an understanding of people and events from a perspective of empathizing, feeling, or valuing the subject in human terms (Hansen, p. 181). Possibly, educational administrators can lead the way to a knowing that captures the human dimension of educational admnistration and employs innovative methodologies for observation. Through scholarship, educational leaders will emerge from our community colleges.

College presidents and governing boards should encourage scholarship and educational leadership among community college administrators by:

Encouraging administrators to participate in scholarly projects (This article is a direct result of my participation in the Leaders Projects sponsored by the Institute for Leadership Development.)

Including administators in symposiums and other intellectual sharing events

Sponsoring sabbaticals for research

Listening to research ideas

Encouraging collaborative efforts between faculty/administrators or administrator/administrator

Allowing flexibility that would foster scholarship

In turn, administrators would expand their perceptions of themselves to include inquiry. Administrators could begin by:

Examining how they know what they know about education What are the assumptions? How did these assumptions originate?

Reading and analyzing writings on educational administration.

Examining the conceptual frameworks from which research policies and programs stem. Do the frameworks presents world-views about students, women and minorities that are consistent with observations?

Establishing networks with administrators and faculty interested in specific areas of curricular innovation

Arranging schedules to include reading, investigation, and examining students' outcomes

Communicating research ideas to others, getting feedback, and

Writing, thinking, and re-writing.

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JAN 13 1989